

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action dated January 22, 2010 in which claims 1-11, 14-20, and 22 were pending and were rejected. In view of the following, reconsideration and allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-7, 11, 14, and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Alpdemir (US PAP 2002/0035474) in view of Albayrak et al. (US Patent No. 6,662,163, hereinafter Albayrak) and in further view of Bangalore et al. (US PAP 2005/0135571, hereinafter Bangalore). Claims 8-10, 15-18, and 20-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Alpdemir in view of Albayrak and Bangalore and in further view of Takebayashi et al. (US Patent No. 5,357,596, hereinafter Takebayashi). Of these, claims 1, 11, and 19 are in independent form.

Applicant would first like to discuss independent claim 11. With this response, Applicant has amended independent claim 11 to further distinguish the claimed subject matter from the cited references. In particular, claim 11 has been amended to recite “storing a plurality of semantic items that maintain information related to responses received from the user for the questions, the plurality of semantic items being stored in an ordered list”, “generating a first audible prompt for a first question in the selected order”, “receiving a user response to the first audible prompt that includes an answer to the first question that is indicative of a value for the first field of the form, wherein the user response includes additional information provided by the user with the answer that is not an answer to the first question, wherein the additional information is associated with one or more semantic items in the ordered list”, and “before proceeding with a next question control in the selected order, departing from the selected order of the questions by accessing the ordered list of semantic items and identifying the one or more semantic items associated with the additional information.” As claimed, an additional audible prompt is generated that is related to at least one other question. Claim 11 also recites “after the user has provided an answer to the at least one other question, returning to the selected order of

the questions to generate a next audible prompt for the next question in the selected order.” Applicant notes that support for these amendments can be found in Applicant’s Specification, in at least one instance, at page 60, line 20 – page 65, line 28; page 72, line 25 – page 75, line 10; page 76, line 26 – page 80, line 8, for example.

In the “Response to Arguments” section on pages 2-8, the Office Action alleges that Alpdemir discloses an ordered list and providing an additional prompt to depart from a selected order. The Office Action specifically cites paragraph [0251] of Alpdemir and alleges an example where deviations in user responses can exist that change prompts presented to a user. The alleged example relates to a new business manager/owner call wherein the user calls to register to be a member. The Office Action alleges that the user is prompted to verify information and subscribe for services by providing credit card information. Pages 4-8 of the Office Action alleges two exemplary scripts for a consumer call in which users provide different answers in seeking business information. However, in each alleged example a user only provides an answer to a question in a prompt that it’s given to access desired business information. Based on the answer, the system provides business information. For example, a user is allowed to provide an answer to the prompt such as “ABC Pizza”, “John Doe”, “Bay Area”, or “Correct” for example. Each of these answers in Alpdemir does not include “additional information”. If a user seeks other information that is not provided in the business information, the user can say “more” or “other”, to be provided with other results. The user can say “help” to be connected to automated help. In each case (see also, paragraphs [0143-0144] and [0250-0338]), the user does not provide a response to a prompt that includes an answer to a question that is indicative of a value for a field of the form and additional information provided by the user with the answer that is not an answer to the question. More importantly, Alpdemir does not disclose or suggest how to handle “additional information” in a response. An utterance of “more” or “help” from a user as disclosed in Alpdemir is not additional information provided with an answer nor is it additional information associated with one or more semantic items in an ordered list. When the user says “more”, for instance, the system of Alpdemir simply provides other business information results and does not generate an additional prompt related to at least one other question as claimed.

Applicant respectfully invites the Examiner to review page 65, lines 5-28 of Applicant's specification which describes an exemplary embodiment of receiving additional information in a response to a prompt. As described, a user can respond to a prompt for a destination city by responding with an answer to the question (i.e., a destination city) and additional information (i.e., a destination date) that is not an answer to the question in the prompt, in one embodiment. Alpdemir is simply void of any such teaching or suggest for receiving responses from a user.

Additionally, Alpdemir does not teach or suggest a plurality of semantic items being stored in an ordered list where additional information provided by a user in a response is associated with one or more semantic items in the ordered list and where the one or more semantic items are identified to depart from the selected order and generate an additional prompt, as recited in independent claim 11. For instance, if a user says "more" the system of Alpdemir simply provides other business information results. If a user says "help", the system of Alpdemir simply connects the user to automated help. In both cases, "more" and "help" are not additional information that are associated with semantic items in an ordered list as recited in claim 11.

For at least these reasons, Applicant respectfully contends that independent claim 11 is neither taught, suggested, nor rendered obvious by the cited references and is in allowable form.

With respect to amended independent claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that the cited references at least do not teach or suggest, either separately or in combination "wherein the dialog departs from the selected order as a function of responses from the user when at least one response includes an answer to a particular prompt that was given and additional information that is provided by the user in the response with the answer, and is not an answer to the particular prompt that was given" and "wherein an additional prompt is then provided to the user concerning the additional information before a next prompt in the selected order, the additional prompt configured to obtain a value for at least one field of the form, wherein the additional prompt is provided before returning to the selected order and providing the next prompt in the selected order." For at least the above reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 1 is in allowable form.

With respect to independent claim 19, Applicant respectfully submits that the cited references at least do not teach or suggest, either separately or in combination, “wherein the client module follows the selected order until a response is received from a user that includes both an answer to a prompt of a question that was given and additional information provided by the user in the response with the answer, the additional information not being an answer to the question that was given, wherein the client module stores the additional information in one or more semantic items in the ordered list such that the one or more semantic items for the additional information are located in the ordered list before a semantic tem for a next question control for a next prompt in the ordered list.” For at least the above reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 19 is in allowable form.

Further, Applicant submits that related dependent claims 5, 7, 9, 10, 14-15, 17-18, 20 and 22 are also in allowable form at least based on their relation to independent claims 1, 11 and 19, discussed above.

Conclusion

The foregoing remarks are intended to assist the Office in examining the application and in the course of explanation may employ shortened or more specific or variant descriptions of some of the claim language. Such description are not intended to limit the scope of the claims; the actual claim language should be considered in each case. Furthermore, the remarks are not to be considered exhaustive of the facets of the invention which are rendered patentable, being only example of certain advantageous features and differences, which Applicant’s Attorney chooses to mention at this time. For the foregoing reasons, Applicant reserves the right to submit additional evidence showing the distinction between Applicant’s invention to be unobvious in view of the prior art.

Furthermore, in commenting on the references and in order to facilitate a better understanding of the differences that are expressed in the claims, certain details of distinction between the same and the present invention have been mentioned, even though such differences

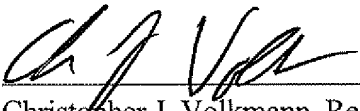
do not appear in all of the claims. It is not intended by mentioning any such unclaimed distinctions to create any implied limitations in the claims.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

The Director is authorized to charge any fee deficiency required by this paper or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 23-1123.

Respectfully submitted,

MICROSOFT CORPORATION

By: 
Christopher J. Volkmann, Reg. No. 60,349
Westman, Champlin & Kelly, P.A.
900 Second Avenue South, Suite 1400
Minneapolis, MN 55402-3244

One Microsoft Way
Redmond, Washington 98052-6399
Phone: (425) 707-9382

CJV/SMK/abs